Here I got a telephone call from the local Soviet. An excited woman's voice urged me to come at once. The Soviet was located a few blocks from the palace. I found the building surrounded by Cossacks and officers, most of them not from our task force. A piece of artillery—the only one left in Gatchina—was posted in front of the building. A young Cossack officer was directing an assault. I asked what he was doing there and on whose order.

"Assignment: to liquidate the Bolshevist nest. . . . Whose order? I don't know. . . . Somebody told me."

I shouted, "You do not know the rules of service. Under battle conditions you have taken a cannon and men for an operation that was not ordered by your direct superiors! If you molest the Soviet, you will raise the whole garrison against us. Perhaps a *provocateur* put this idea into your head."

The officer grasped the situation. "Exactly so, Mr. Commissar," he said. "I ought to be court-martialed."

"Get your men together. Put guards on both corners of the block, not at the building itself." Before I had finished, the young officer was barking, "Cossacks! Listen to the order! Fall in! Attention!"

TRIP TO LUGA

I returned to the palace. Krasnov again called me to his office. "The enemy had at least fifty thousand men, perhaps more, in the field," he told me. "They could have crushed us but their tactics were miserable. Next time they will have regular officers with them. Without reinforcements, we can neither advance nor repulse the enemy if he decides to attack." He asked me to go to Luga and if possible to Pskov, to check conditions along the railroad and take the necessary steps to speed up the movement of our echelons. My first task was to learn the whereabouts of a train with munitions that, according to reports, had passed Luga and was stopped somewhere not far from Gatchina.

Before leaving, I put a call through to my office in Pskov. Emma was alone in the Commissariat. None of the staff had reported for duty, but people from Petrograd were swarming into the office, seeking information and aid. General Baranovsky was ready to accept appointment to the post of Commander of the Northern Front and thought that Cheremissov would relinquish his command without much fuss. Then I wired Emma Kerensky's order releasing Cheremissov and appointing Baranovsky to succeed him. Kerensky had signed this order on a page of my notebook—it was, I think, the last order he signed in his public career. Removal of Cheremissov was also Emma's